

NEWPORT, RI¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

Newport, Rhode Island (41.50°N, 71.30°W) (USGS 2008) is located at the southern end of Aquidneck Island in Newport County. The city is located 11.3 miles from Narragansett Pier, 59.7 miles from Boston, MA, and 187 miles from New York City.



Map 1. Location of Newport, RI (US Census Bureau 2000a)

Historical/Background

English settlers founded Newport in 1639 (City of Newport nd). Although Newport's port is now mostly dedicated to tourism and recreational boating, it has had a long commercial fishing presence. In the mid 1700s, Newport was one of the five largest ports in colonial North America and until Point Judith's docking facilities were developed it was the center for fishing and shipping in Rhode Island (Hall-Arber et al. 2001; RIEDC 2008).

Between 1800 and 1930, the bay and inshore fleet dominated the fishing industry of Newport. Menhaden was the most important fishery in Newport and all of Rhode Island until the 1930s when the fishery collapsed. At this time the fishing industry shifted to groundfish

¹ These community profiles have been created to serve as port descriptions in Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for fisheries management actions. They also provide baseline information from which to begin research for Social Impact Assessments (SIAs). Further, they provide information relevant to general community impacts for National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and information on minorities and low income populations for Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 on Environmental Justice.

² For purposes of citation please use the following template: "Community Profile of *Town, ST*. Prepared under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. For further information contact Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov."

trawling. The use of the diesel engine, beginning in the 1920s, facilitated fishing farther from shore than was done in prior years (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data, Newport had a total population of 26,475, down 6.2% from the reported population of 28,227 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 48.2% were males and 51.8% were females. The median age was 34.9 years and 73.4% of the population was 21 years or older while 14.8% of the population was 62 or older.

Unlike many fishing communities, Newport's age structure (see Figure 1) is skewed to some degree to the younger age groups; the largest percentage of the population found in the age group from 20 to 29, which in part reflects the presence of the nearby naval base. Gender balance is fairly even until age 70 and above.

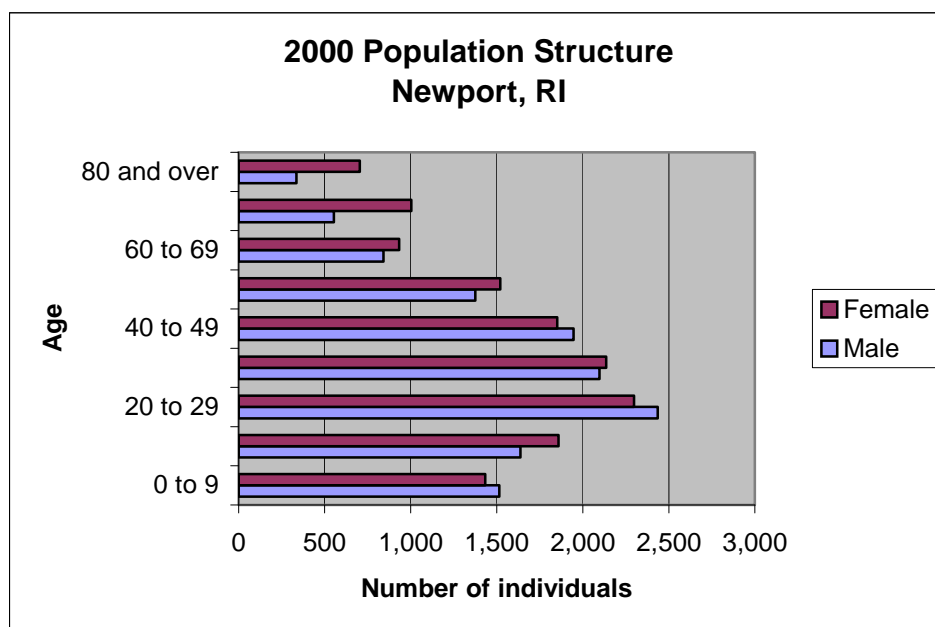


Figure 1. Newport's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population was White (87.2%), with 8.1% Black or African American, 1.3% Asian, 0.8% Native American, and 0.1% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 5.5% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (27.8%), English (12.9%), Italian (11.4%) and Portuguese (7.3%). With regard to region of birth, 45.6% were born in Rhode Island, 46.7% were born in a different state and 5.6% were born outside of the U.S. (including 2.9% who were not United States citizens).

³ While mid-term estimates are available for some larger communities, data from the 2000 Census are the only data universally available for the communities being profiled in the Northeast. Thus for cross-comparability we have used 2000 data even though these data may have changed significantly since 2000 for at least some communities.

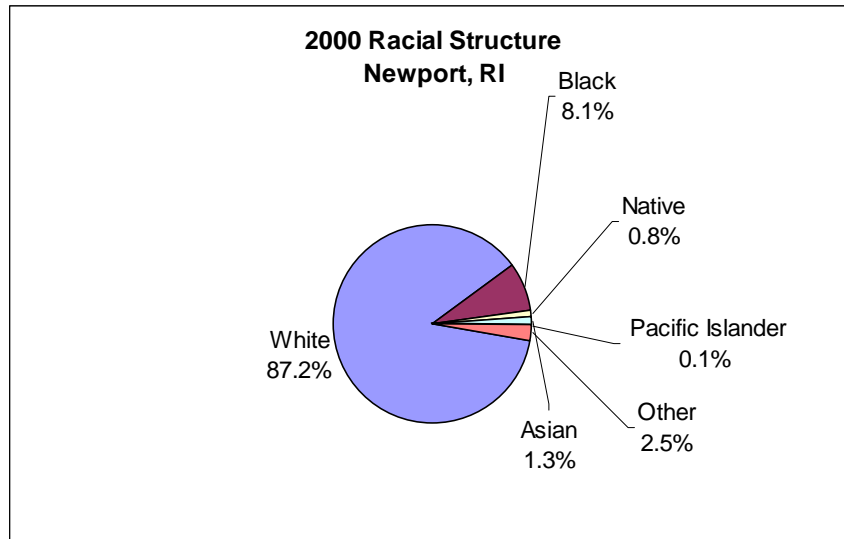


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

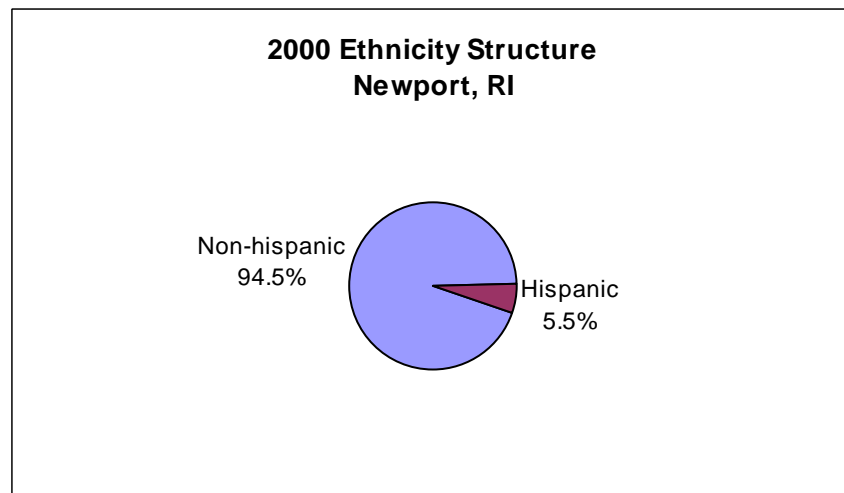


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 90.4% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 9.6% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 3.6% of the population who spoke English less than 'very well' according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 21.4% were high school graduates or higher and 26.3% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 4.5% did not reach ninth grade, 8.4% attended some high school but did not graduate, 21.4% completed high school, 18.7% had some college with no degree, 5.5% received their associate's degree, 26.3% earned their bachelor's degree, and 15.1% received either their graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through U.S. Census data, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000, the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Newport County was Catholic with 13 congregations and 68,668 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Episcopal (10 with

4,720 adherents), and American Baptist (15 with 3,022 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 57.3% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

Like other fishing communities in the Northeast, Amendment 13 brought significant changes to the local fishing industry. This amendment attempts to rebuild groundfish stocks by decreasing the allowed fishing days at sea, simplifying what was a complicated schedule of allowed fishing days mixed with restricted fishing areas. In addition to Amendment 13, pollution impacts, an increase in tourism, increasing property values, and competition with recreational vessel for limited wharf space restrict fishing industry infrastructure and contribute to the decline of the Newport's fleet (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

Cultural attributes

With such a diverse background, the city of Newport makes every effort to embrace its heritage through the many festivals that the city holds. One of the major events for the city is [The Tall Ships Rhode Island](#). The event includes tours of historic national and international Tall Ships, an international marketplace, and family entertainment. The Great Chowder Cook Off and the Taste of Rhode Island festivals both celebrate the region's past and present ties with the fishing industry, at least indirectly, through a celebration of the state's culinary heritage (NHC nd).

For a weekend in September, the city celebrates Irish music, culture, cuisine, and crafts. The [Newport Waterfront Irish Festival](#) provides quality family entertainment in the heart of Newport's beautiful historic waterfront. This three day community celebration features five stages of national and international entertainment, the Special Event Community Tent, Travel to Ireland exhibits, an Irish Marketplace with Irish and handcrafted items for sale, a dance hall, and children's play area (NHC nd).

Newport Kids Fest - Maritime Fair is another event that remembers the city's maritime history. The event is hosted by the Museum of Yachting as part of the broader Kids Fest and includes many maritime related activities including knot tying, lobster races, model boat kits, coast guard safety, and navigation (Rourke 2004).

The annual Blessing of the Fleet takes place in early December as part of the [Christmas in Newport](#) festival, and includes a parade by both commercial and recreational vessels decorated for the holidays. The city also celebrates both Irish Heritage Month (HPHC 2008) and Oktoberfest (NHC nd) to remember and embrace its roots.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

Omega Sea (USFDA 2008) Aquidneck Lobster Co., Dry Dock Seafood, International Marine Industries Inc., [Long Wharf Seafood](#), [Neptune Trading Group Ltd.](#), and Parascandolo and Sons Inc. are wholesalers and retailers of seafood in Newport. Parascandolo and Sons Inc. owns a privately operated pier used primarily by the large mesh multispecies fleet, but also lands substantial amounts of squid. According to the NMFS Port Agent, Parascandolo requires a high volume of product in order to maintain their waterfront business, regardless of whether it is purchased or packed out.⁴

⁴ Community Review Comments, Walter Anoushian, NMFS Port Agent, January 31, 2008

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 70.1% (15,266 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 4.7% were unemployed, 7.3% were in the Armed Forces, and 58.1% were employed.

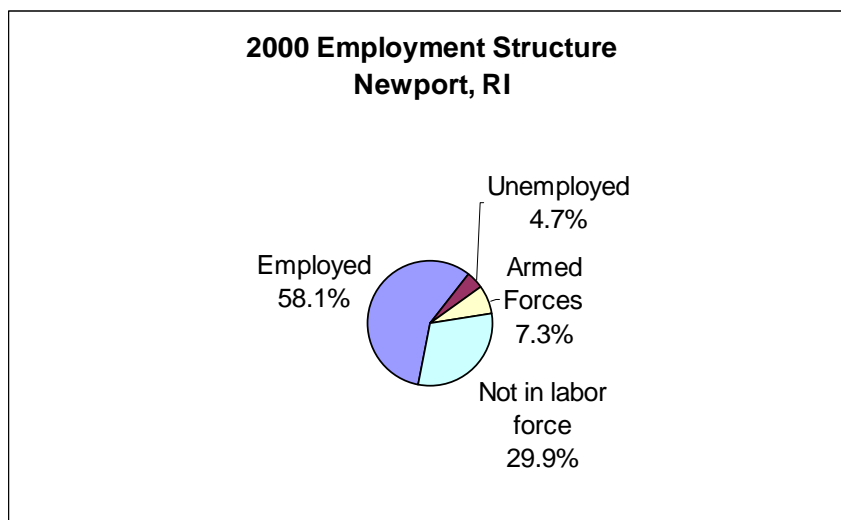


Figure 4. Employment structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census groupings which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 91 positions or 0.7% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 1,056 positions or 8.3% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (19.9%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (18.6%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (12.3%), retail trade (10.9%), and manufacturing (7.2%) were the primary industries.

The median household income in Newport was \$40,669, up 33.2% from \$30,534 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990) and median per capita income was \$25,441. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 27.2% more per year than females.

The average family in Newport consisted of 2.86 persons. With respect to poverty, 12.9% of families, up from 10.0% in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990) and 14.4% of individuals earned below the U.S. Census poverty threshold. This threshold is \$8,794 for individuals and ranges from \$11,239 through \$35,060 for families, depending on number of persons (2-9) (US Census Bureau 2000b). In 2000, 32.4% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Newport had a total of housing 13,266 units of which 87.4% were occupied and 37.3% were detached one unit homes. Approximately half (54.4%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes and boats accounted for no housing units; 88.9% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$161,700. Of vacant housing units, 51.7% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 58.1% were renter occupied.

⁵ Again, Census data from 2000 are used because they are universally available and offer cross-comparability among communities. Some statistics, particularly median home price, are likely to have changed significantly since 2000.

Government

The city of Newport is governed through a Council/City Manager form of government. There are seven members; one representative is elected from the City's four voting wards and three are elected at-large, all for two year terms. The Mayor is elected by the Council from among the three at-large councilors (City of Newport 2008).

Fishery involvement in the government

Newport has both a Harbormaster and a NMFS Port Agent based in the town.

Institutional

Fishing associations

There are several fishing associations which aid the fishing industry in Newport. The Ocean State Fishermen's Association is located in Barrington; the Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen's Association and the Rhode Island Lobstermen's Association are in Wakefield; and the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association is in Scituate, Massachusetts. The State Pier 9 Association and Atlantic Offshore Fishermen's Association are involved in the Newport's fishing industry (Hall-Arber et al. 2001).

Fishery assistance centers

Information on fishing assistance centers in Newport is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Other fishing related organizations

The Rhode Island Seafood Council is located in Charlestown. The [Seamen's Church Institute](#) is an organization that brings soup around to the docks for workers and fishermen.

The [Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island](#) was founded in 2004 and is home to nonprofit commercial fishing organizations, and serves "as a headquarters for bringing fishermen, scientists, managers, and elected officials together to discuss issues." The goals of the center are "to improve fisheries and understanding of the marine environment through education, collaborative research, and cooperation" (CFC nd).

Physical

There are several ways to access Newport and to travel within the city. The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) buses, and state highway systems provide public access to the city. RIPTA trolleys are generally used to visit Newport. RIPTA's Providence/Newport Water Ferry in Narragansett Bay connects Providence's Point Street Landing and Newport's Perrotti Park (RIPTA nd). The Rhode Island state airport, the Theodore Francis Green airport, is located in Providence. There are three Amtrak stations in Rhode Island, in Kingston, Westerly, and Providence.

As for fishing infrastructure, Newport has the State Pier #9 which is the only state owned facility for commercial fishing in Newport Harbor, providing dockage for approximately 60 full-time fishing vessels primarily used by the lobster fleet (RIDEM 2007). There are also three saltwater boat launches in Newport (RIDEM 2005a).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁶

Commercial

The South of Cape Cod midwater trawl fleet (pair and single) consists of eight vessels with principal ports of New Bedford, MA; Newport, RI; North Kingstown, RI; and Point Judith, RI. This sector made 181 trips and landed 17,189 metric tons of herring in 2003. Maine had the highest reported landings (46%) in 2003, followed by Massachusetts (38%), New Hampshire (8%), and Rhode Island (7%) (NEFMC 2004).

Newport has a highly diverse fishery. Of the federal landed species, scallop had the highest value in 2006, at over \$13 million. The average value of scallop landings for 1997-2006 was just over \$2.5 million; 2006 landings represent a more than five-fold increase over this average value. Lobster was the most valuable species on average, worth more than \$2.7 million on average, and close to \$3 million in 2006. The squid, mackerel, and butterfish grouping, largemouth groundfish, and monkfish were all valuable fisheries in Newport (see Table 1). The value of landings for home ported vessels in Newport was relatively consistent from 1997-2006, with a high of just under \$8 million in 2003 (see Table 2). The level of landings in Newport was steady from 1997-2004, and then saw enormous increases in 2005 and 2006, to almost \$21 million in 2006. Home ported vessels in Newport declined from a high of 59 in 2000 to 48 in 2006, while the number of vessels with owners living in Newport increased from 13 in 1997 to 18 in 2006; this implies that most vessels home ported in Newport have owners residing in other communities.

⁶ In reviewing the commercial landings data several factors need to be kept in mind. 1) While both federal and state landings are included, some states provide more detailed data to NMFS than others. For example, shellfish may not be included or data may be reported only by county and not by port. 2) Some communities did not have individual port codes until more recently. Before individual port codes were assigned, landings from those ports were coded at the county level or as an aggregate of two geographically close small ports. Where landings were coded at the county level they cannot be sorted to individual ports for those earlier years, e.g., prior to 2000. 3) Where aggregated codes were used, those aggregate codes may still exist and be in use alongside the new individual codes. Here the landings which are still assigned to the aggregate port code cannot be sorted into the individual ports, so port level data are only those which used the individual port code. 4) Even when individual port codes exist, especially for small ports, landings may be coded at the county level. Here again it is impossible to disaggregate these to a port level, making the port level landings incomplete. 5) In all these cases, the per port data in this profile may under report the total level of landings to the port, though all landings are accounted for in the overall NMFS database.

Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value by Federally Managed Groups of Landings in Newport

	Average from 1997-2006	2006 only
Lobster	2,758,908	2,971,680
Scallop	2,528,448	13,267,494
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	1,425,947	1,315,229
Largemouth Groundfish⁷	1,039,962	445,273
Monkfish	878,265	1,068,547
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	739,880	815,918
Other⁸	334,103	401,779
Smallmouth Groundfish⁹	179,296	43,165
Skate	58,481	224,184
Herring	42,538	267,164
Dogfish	26,441	6,037
Red Crab	15,560	0
Bluefish	11,759	9,878
Tilefish	9,230	1,213

Vessels by Year¹⁰

Table 2. All columns represent Federal Vessel Permits or Landings Value between 1997 and 2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)	Level of fishing home port (\$)	Level of fishing landed port (\$)
1997	52	13	5,130,647	7,598,103
1998	52	16	6,123,619	8,196,648
1999	52	14	6,313,350	8,740,253
2000	59	14	6,351,986	8,296,017
2001	52	15	5,813,509	7,485,584
2002	55	17	6,683,412	7,567,366
2003	52	16	7,859,848	9,082,560
2004	52	15	5,951,228	8,402,556
2005	54	17	6,012,472	14,281,505
2006	48	18	6,811,060	20,837,561

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport

Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹¹

Level of fishing home port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries associated with home ported vessels

Level of fishing landed port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries landed in location)

⁷ Largemouth groundfish: cod, winter flounder, witch flounder, yellowtail flounder, am. plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

⁸ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

⁹ Smallmouth Multi-Species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

¹⁰ Numbers of vessels by owner's city and homeport are as reported by the permit holder on permit application forms. These may not correspond to the port where a vessel lands or even spends the majority of its time when docked.

¹¹ The Owner-City from the permit files is technically the address at which the owner receives mail concerning their permitted vessels, which could reflect the actual location of residence, the mailing address as distinct from residence, owner business location, or the address at which a subsidiary receives mail about the permits.

Recreational

There is a large recreational fishing sector in Rhode Island. “In Rhode Island, nearly 362,000 recreational marine anglers – more than half from out-of-state – made over 1.5 million trips, catching 4.3 million pounds of sport fish and releasing about 55 percent in 2004” (RIDEM 2004). A 2005 survey by the RI Dept. of Environmental Management showed Newport to be one of the three most popular sites in the state for shore based recreational saltwater fishing (RIDEM 2005). Recently more sub-tropical and tropical species have been found off Newport (Mooney 2006).

Subsistence

Information on subsistence fishing in Newport is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

FUTURE

From interviews collected for the “New England Fishing Communities” report, Hall-Arber and others (2001) found that fishermen fear that increasing tourism and cruise ships will cause the State Pier 9 to be used more for tourism rather than a harbor for commercial fishing, as the fishing industry is far from being a major economic input to Newport. Until 1973, Newport was Rhode Island’s fishing and shipping center. For example, in 1971 over half of the state’s total commercial fisheries landings were in Newport. In 1973, Point Judith became and presides as the most important commercial port in the state (Griffith and Dyer 1996).

REFERENCES

- Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA). 2000. Interactive Maps and Reports, Counties within one state [cited Oct 2005]. Available at: <http://www.thearda.com/>
- City of Newport. nd. Web site [cited Feb 2007]. Available at: <http://www.cityofnewport.com/>
- Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island (CFC). nd. Web site [cited Jul 2007]. Available at: <http://www.cfcri.com/>
- Griffith D, Dyer CL. 1996. An Appraisal of the Social and Cultural Aspects of the Multispecies Groundfish Fishery in the New England and the Mid-Atlantic Regions. Report prepared under Contract Number 50-DGNF-5-00008 between The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and Aguirre International [cited Jan 2007]. Available at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/clay/overview.htm>
- Hall-Arber M, Dyer C, Poggie J, McNally J, Gagne R. 2001. New England’s Fishing Communities. Cambridge (MA): MIT Sea Grant 01-15. Available at: <http://seagrant.mit.edu/cmss/>
- Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (HPHC), State of Rhode Island. 2008. Web site [cited Sept 2008]. Available at: <http://www.preservation.ri.gov/>
- Mooney T. 2006. Fish follow warm water. Providence Journal, 2006 Aug 25.
- New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC). 2004. Proposed Atlantic Herring Specifications for the 2005 Fishing Year (January 1 – December 31, 2005) [cited Feb 2007]. Available at: http://www.nefmc.org/herring/final_2005_herring_specs.pdf
- Newport Harbor Corporation (NHC). nd. Newport Waterfront Festivals at the Newport Yachting Center [cited Feb 2007]. Available at: <http://www.newportfestivals.com/>
- Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA). nd. Web site [cited Sept 2008]. Available at: <http://www.ripta.com/>

- Rourke B. 2004. Flying Popcorn film fest gets rolling Saturday. Providence Journal, 2004 Apr 15.
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). 2004. Annual Report 2004. [cited Sept 2008]. Available at: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/ar/arpt04.pdf>
- RIDEM. 2005. Evaluation of Alternative Sites for Fishing Access. Appendix A. Online Recreational Fishing Survey [cited Jan 2007]. Available at: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/plandev/survpdfs/v2appxa.pdf>
- RIDEM. 2005a. Rhode Island Public Boat Launching Sites: Saltwater Ramps [cited Sept 2008]. Available at: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/boatlnch.htm#salt>
- RIDEM. 2007. Division of Coastal Resources [cited Feb 2007]. Available at: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/coastal/>
- Rhode Island. Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC). 2008. Data and Publications: State and Community Profiles [cited Jan 2007]. Available at: <http://www.riedc.com/>
- US Census Bureau. 1990. 1990 Decennial Census [cited Jul 2007]. Available from: <http://factfinder.census.gov/>
- US Census Bureau. 2000a. United States Census 2000 [cited Jul 2007]. Available from: <http://www.census.gov/>
- US Census Bureau. 2000b. Poverty thresholds 2000 [cited Jun 2007]. Available from: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh00.html>
- US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA). 2008. US FDA-EU Exporters by state and city [cited Sept 2008]. Available at: <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~frf/euclsrpt.html>
- US Geological Survey (USGS). 2008. US Board on Geographic Names:Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) [cited Sept 2008]. Available at: <http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic/>